

Policy and Procedures for Requesting AFRTS® Satellite Service.

Who is AFRTS for and what is its mission?

The American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) is an activity of the Internal Communications (IC) under the direction of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD/PA). The AFRTS mission is to provide radio and television information and entertainment programming to Department of Defense (DoD) personnel and their family members stationed overseas or serving at sea where English language broadcast service is unavailable or inadequate. The programs are representative of those seen and heard in the United States, and are provided without censorship, propagandizing or manipulation.

AFRTS is strictly non-commercial and is thus obligated to remove commercial announcements appearing in its programming sources. These commercials are replaced with spot announcements that communicate Department of Defense (DoD) internal information themes and public service messages of interest to DoD personnel and their family members. Since dissemination of internal and command information is the primary AFRTS mission, information and entertainment programs provided by AFRTS serve as excellent vehicles for this purpose.

AFRTS acquires the right to use television programming from many sources at extremely low cost. Most often, the cost to the government is no more than the program owner's administrative cost. Once acquired, we distribute the programs from the American Forces Broadcast Center (AFN-BC), with assurances to the program owners that we will take all reasonable actions to limit our distribution to Department of Defense personnel.

The AFRTS authorized audience is Department of Defense personnel and their families living and working overseas and privilege-holding employees of companies working DoD contracts. Since 1942, AFRTS has provided news, sports, information, and entertainment to this audience. Today, we operate in nearly every country around the world, have over 1,000 outlets around the world and are on Navy ships at sea, serving close to a million U.S. military personnel and their families. We must do everything in our power to ensure the continued availability of these programs for our service men and women. The loss of this programming would have a serious, negative effect on the quality of life for the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines serving around the world who have become accustomed to this "touch of home." That is why we go to such great lengths to protect the copyrights of programs. The AFRTS audience also bears this responsibility and must protect programming from misuse.

How do I request AFRTS® service?

AFRTS equipment can be obtained two ways, by direct purchase or temporary loan. Both options require submission of a completed *"Request for Service"* form to AFRTS.

Access to AFRTS programming is restricted by DoD regulations.

You are eligible to receive AFRTS programming if you meet the following criteria.

- Active Duty US military stationed or deployed overseas and their accompanying family members.
- DoD civilians assigned or deployed overseas and their accompanying family members.
- Direct Hire US Government State Department employees assigned overseas.
- DoD Direct Hire Contractors who are US citizens and directly sponsored by the host command.
- Retired US military members may purchase decoders from military exchanges or directly from AFRTS.

DoD Contractors must meet additional eligibility requirements

- Command supported DoD contractors overseas must have an official identification card issued by the DoD, Combatant Command or Major Command.
- This ID must be presented at any military exchange in order to purchase a decoder.
- If purchasing a decoder through the mail, the supported command must fax or scan and email a copy of the ID to COMM 951-413-2410, DSN 312-348-2410 (fax) or decoders@dma.mil.
- Military commands may purchase decoders for use by authorized contractors, but the decoders must be registered to the command, not individual contractors.

Obtaining Loaned AFRTS equipment

Loaned AFRTS equipment must be set up in an area where the majority of the troops assigned will have access to the programming. Systems set up in morale tents, mess tents or similar areas meet this requirement. AFRTS satellite signal decoders, satellite dishes, low noise block converter (LNB's), line amplifiers and other equipment, excluding cable, that is released to a unit on a temporary loan must be returned to AFRTS upon completion of the deployment. The unit that receives AFRTS equipment is fiscally responsible for the gear until it is returned to AFRTS.

AFRTS signal decoders are individually addressable and controllable, just like the commercial satellite providers Direct TV or Dish Network in the United States. This means that AFRTS can "turn off" decoders that are missing, stolen or still activated after the date the receiving unit listed as their rotation date from the deployed location. It is critical each unit maintain frequent contact with the affiliated Broadcasting Service for your region and update changes in location, rotation date or personnel responsible for AFRTS equipment in order to prevent decoder deactivation.

Direct purchase of AFRTS equipment

Units that deploy often are highly encouraged to use unit funds to purchase the equipment needed to obtain the AFRTS signal. Purchasing the equipment will allow your unit near instant access to AFRTS programming at any deployed location practically anywhere on the planet outside the United States. Since you control the equipment, you won't have to wait for it to be shipped to you or run the risk of it getting lost in the supply system.

Units can procure the Scientific Atlanta Model D9865 AFRTS integrated receiver/decoder (IRD) through the Television-Audio Support Activity (T-ASA) site <http://tasa.dodmedia.osd.mil/log/index.htm>. A help file is available on the "requisition on-line processing" page. Several distributors offer dishes that will work with our satellite network or you can purchase from T-ASA.

What do I do once I have the decoder?

Once the decoder or decoders have arrived, please refer to the setup directions for your area of the world in Chapter 4 of this booklet. Once the satellite dish has been installed and the decoder is receiving a locked+sig indication the decoder can then be authorized for AFRTS programming reception.

To request decoder authorization, customers should log on to the AFN Connect site by navigating to <http://www.myafn.net> and clicking "Manage My Decoder". Customers enter their decoder's TID and UA number (Tracking ID and User Address) and are then advanced to a decoder authorization request form. The decoder request information will be reviewed by AFN. Leased customer request authorizations must originate from the military exchange or store that leases the decoder. Individual requests for leased decoder authorization will be rejected. Approved authorizations should occur within 24 hours upon receipt of the request.

If the Internet and e-mail access are not available to the requestor (remote locations), customers who purchased a decoder can contact the AFN Broadcast Center directly at commercial (951) 413-2339, or DSN (312) 348-1339, or AFRTS-HQ at commercial (301) 222-6532, or DSN (312) 733-4532. IRD's will be entered manually into the AFN Connect web site by AFN-BC Technologists receiving this information. Callers will need to have the TID,UA and model number of each decoder to provide to the technologist in order to activate the decoders. See appendix E for details on the web procedure.

What can the organization do if there are not enough DoD people to justify a free AFRTS® decoder or the free decoder will not serve everyone?

As a general rule, only one decoder or set of decoders (if cabled) is provided per location. If additional decoders are desired, they may be purchased by the organization (military unit or embassy), with HQ AFRTS approval. Ancillary equipment such as the satellite dish, LNB, feedhorn and connecting cable can also be purchased via the Broadcast Center (BC). The telephone number is (951) 413-2661

Contact HQ AFRTS Operations at (301) 222-6532 or by email: decoders@hq.afis.osd.mil to request an organization purchase of decoders. Once approved, AFRTS will provide a letter to the BC authorizing the sale.

Can I lease or rent a decoder instead of buying one?

AAFES and NEXCOM lease the Scientific Atlanta PowerVu decoders for approximately \$25 a month in both the European and Japan/Korea theaters. The cost to buy the decoder and dish is several hundred dollars. Check with your local exchange for current system pricing. The dish requires installation and a length of coaxial cable to connect the dish to the satellite receiver.

Can I buy my own decoder?

AFRTS cannot sell decoders to private individuals. Although HQ AFRTS approves the sale of decoders to commands AAFES or NEXCOM now sells and leases the equipment to authorize individuals. Decoders bought through Internet web sites such as "Ebay.com" will not work on our system and will not be authorized to receive programming.

For updates on the leasing process contact HQ AFRTS Operations at (301) 222-6532, or email: afrtops1@hq.afis.osd.mil.

Reauthorization of decoders

Authorizations expire three years after the date of the initial authorization request. If you are remaining overseas more than three years, you must resubmit the authorization request via AFN Connect. To avoid a break in service, submit your reauthorization request at least a month before your current authorization expires.

If your authorization expires you will be sent an email to the address previously provided on the AFN Connect form. You will have 15 days to follow the reauthorization instructions provided in the email to avoid an interruption in service. Should we not have an email address on file or action is not taken prior to the end of the 15 day window, the decoder will be deactivated. Then you must log on to AFN Connect and complete the authorization request. Leased decoder authorization updates must originate from the military exchange or store that leases the decoder. Individual requests for leased decoder authorization updates will be rejected. Approved authorizations should occur within 24 hours upon receipt of the request.

Resale of decoder

You may only sell a decoder to another authorized audience member. Members of the authorized audience include:

- U.S. active duty military service members and their family members.
- U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) or Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) civilians and their family members.
- U.S. military retirees and their family members.

In cases of resale, the new owner must immediately log onto AFN Connect and re-register the decoder. The seller must inform us by email at decoders@hq.afis.osd.mil that the decoder has been sold to another person.